UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Lebanon asks Secretary-General to help stop Israel's bombardment of southern Lebanon; Israeli Prime Minister says his Government only striking Hezbollah positions.

+ Israel's Permanent Representative tells Security Council President that Israel and Palestinians should negotiate their differences together.

+ Secretary-General welcomes Joint Framework Document on Northern Ireland.

+ Secretary-General leaves for Europe; will pay official visit to Austria; later to open Social Development Summit in Copenhagen.

+ Conference on "Sports Against Drugs" calls on athletes to protect youth against drug abuse.

+ More than 24,000 refugees, fleeing ethnic conflict in Burundi, cross into Tanzania.

+ IFAD launches project to encourage sustainable development for indigenous peoples in Bolivia.

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Lebanon has expressed serious concern over continuous Israeli bombardment of areas in south Lebanon in the last two days, as well as Israel's blockade of the seaport of Tyre, according to a United Nations spokesman. The country's Permanent Representative, Samir Moubarak, has called on Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to use his good offices to try and resolve issues relating to Israel's actions. The Secretary-General has since spoken with the Israeli permanent representative Gad Yaacobi.

Meanwhile, Israel's Permanent Representative telephoned a response from Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin to the Secretary-General. Mr. Rabin said Israel was not shelling Lebanon, but was striking Hezbollah positions, which were

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attempting to undermine Israel's security. When the Government of Lebanon prevents Hezbollah and other terrorist groups from carrying out terrorist attacks and from launching artillery fire there will be no need for further action by Israel, Mr. Rabin said.

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Israel's Permanent Representative Gad Yaacobi today met with Security Council President Legwaila J. Legwaila (Botswana) to discuss the Arab Group's request for an urgent Council meeting to consider Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. In a letter dated 22 February, the Group asked the Council to consider the dangerous consequences of such activities for the Palestinian people and the Middle East peace process.

Ambassador Yaacobi told United Nations correspondents he had informed the Council President that Israel and the Palestinians should discuss and negotiate any differences between them. Dramatizing the confrontation between the two parties in the Security Council would hinder rather than enhance the peace process, to which Israel was totally committed. There was no better alternative for the parties and his Government was determined to continue to enhance prospects for a positive conclusion to negotiations.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today warmly welcomed the Joint Framework Document on Northern Ireland, which has been published by the Governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom, according to a United Nations spokesman.

The Secretary-General said the Document provided a new approach to addressing the problems, which had confronted the people of Northern Ireland for far too long. He fervently hoped that discussions between all relevant parties could now commence and that a lasting political settlement acceptable to all parties could be achieved.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has left for Europe, where he will pay an official visit to Austria and then travel to Copenhagen for the World Summit on Social Development, a United Nations spokesman said today. In Vienna, the Secretary-General is expected to meet with senior Austrian Government officials, including the Federal President, the Chancellor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the city's mayor. He will also receive an honourary doctorate of law from the University of Vienna.

Next week, the Secretary-General will chair the bi-annual meeting of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), hosted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Topics will include the status of women in the United Nations system, follow-up to the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, and coordination of United Nations narcotic control activities. Following the ACC meeting, the Secretary-General will preside over a forum on

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the future of the United Nations system, which will be attended by ACC members and representatives of prominent think-tanks and foundations.

The Secretary-General will also deliver a key-note address at the Vienna Seminar, which is co-sponsored by the Austrian Government and the International Peace Academy, to commemorate the United Nations Fiftieth Anniversary and the Seminar's twenty-fifth. The topic of his address will be "Peace-Making and Peace-keeping in the Next Century".

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The International Conference on Sports Against Drugs has concluded its meeting in Rome by appealing to all athletes to make decisive commitments to protect youth from drug abuse and to disseminate the message through sports events. The appeal adopted by the Conference stated that sports could greatly contribute to preventing drug abuse among young people by helping them to cope with difficult situations and by strengthening their personality and self-esteem. Sports could also transmit the values of self discipline, fairness and cooperation, which were part of the Olympic ethics.

The Conference noted that drug-abuse prevention programmes were not always able to reach street children and other youth outside school systems. There was a need for a comprehensive, multisectoral approach to make preventive efforts effective. The Conference also stressed that drug prevention programmes should focus on helping youth at risk to develop alternative coping skills and on promoting healthy lifestyles.

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More than 24,000 refugees trying to escape ethnic fighting in Burundi have crossed into Tanzania in the last week, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The 16,000 Burundis and 8,000 Rwandans who had sought asylum in Burundi have scattered in Tanzanian border villages. Tanzania already hosts 60,000 Burundi and 600,000 of the 2 million Rwandese refugees in neighbouring countries.

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The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Bolivian Government have signed a $6.26 million loan agreement to help finance a sustainable development project by Beni Indigenous Peoples. With the new project, the seventh since 1991, IFAD's assistance to Bolivia will be equivalent to $70 million.

The project will provide land tenure security and prevent non-indigenous control over natural resources. It will seek to ensure Government recognition of the councils of indigenous communities as legal entities. It will also provide for land demarcation, titling and transfer of property rights from private "concession holders" to indigenous peoples.

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